

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A protective structure (1) for an apparatus for the handling of containers comprising a frame (2), panels (9) for insulating it from the external environment, fastened to said frame (2) by fastening means (10) which create a gap between said frame (2) and said panels (9), and gasket means arranged in said gap, said gasket means comprising a tubular gasket wall (11) which can be expanded by forcing in fluids under pressure, characterised in that in non-operating conditions the gasket wall (11) become separated from the surface of the frame (2) and of the panel (9), therefore ceasing to have any contact with the protective structure; opposite ends of said gasket wall being fastened respectively to top and bottom portions of the frame (2), thereby holding in position said gasket wall.

2. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 1 in which said gasket wall (11) in operating conditions is expanded by a supply of said fluids under pressure until it engages ~~they engage~~ to form a seal with the surfaces of said panels (9) and said frame (2).

3. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~ in which said gasket wall (11) is ~~are~~ tubular and closed at both ends.

4. (Previously presented) A protective structure according to claim 3 in which said gasket wall (11) has an ovoid or elliptical shape in cross-section.

5. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ in which said gasket walls (11) are of elastic material.

6. (Previously presented) A protective structure according to claim 5 in which said gasket wall (11) is formed from an elastomer resistant to sterilising products.

7. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 5 ~~or 6~~ in which said gasket wall 11 is formed from polyurethane elastomers compatible with food processing applications.
8. (Previously presented) A protective structure according to claim 1 in which said gasket wall (11) is in connection with means of supplying fluids under pressure.
9. (Original) A protective structure according to claim 8 in which said means of supplying fluids under pressure are compressors for the supply of compressed air.
10. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 8 ~~or 9~~ in which the connection between said gasket wall (11) and said means of supplies of fluids under pressure is made by means of tubes which are inserted into small holes arranged on the surface of said gasket wall (11).
11. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 8 ~~claims 8 to 10~~ in which the connection between said gasket wall (11) and said means for supplies of fluids under pressure is in series or in parallel.
12. (Original) A protective structure according to claim 1 in which said panels (9) are fastened to said frame (2) in a fixed manner.
13. (Original) A protective structure according to claim 1 in which said panels (9) are fastened to said frame (2) in a movable manner.
14. (Currently amended) A protective structure according to claim 13 in which said fastening means (10) comprise hinging ~~hinging~~ means and locking means.

15. (Original) A protective structure according to claim 13 in which said fastening means (10) comprise guidance means (10a) and sliding means (10b) which engage slidably in said guidance means (10a).

16. (Previously presented) The protective structure according to claim 1, wherein said frame comprises a plurality of uprights (4) connected at the upper end by a perimeter edge (6) and by reinforcing bars (7, 8), the ends of the gasket wall being fastened, respectively, to one of the uprights or to the perimeter edge at the top, and to one of the reinforcing bars at the bottom of the protective structure.